

# Handout for Tried and True Research Strategies for African-American Genealogy

By [Kathy Lynne Marshall](#) for the Atlanta AAHGS Chapter, May 20, 2023

Kathy Lynne Marshall, a Black Ancestor Biographer, will provide Atlanta AAHGS chapter members with a presentation about how they can use tried-and-true research strategies to write and publish their own African-American Genealogy books. Kathy will share 20 lessons that attendees can immediately apply to write their own book. As Ida B. Wells said: "Let the Truth Be Told!" It's our responsibility to add our stories into the American historical record.

Lesson 1: Interview, record, and video your relatives.

Lesson 2: Build a family tree for the family line you've chosen to study.

Lesson 3: Organize your research documents by family group and individuals within the family.

Lesson 4: Locate genealogy groups on social media platforms to find more of your relatives.

Lesson 5: Plan to write a First Edition book on Day One of your research.

Lesson 6: Focus your book on one family member.

Lesson 7: Develop a book template.

Lesson 8: Examine your genealogy documents and write narratives about the data.

Lesson 9: Check historical maps to note adjacent counties where your family lived.

Lesson 10: Look at marriage documents to discover family relationship clues.

Lesson 11: Check land and probate records for genealogical GOLD.

Lesson 12: Make a poster from your research.

Lesson 13: DNA test your family (testing is key for Blacks and adoptees).

Lesson 14: Check National Park Service historical building surveys for plans, history, and architectural plans for some plantations and other structures.

Lesson 15: Seek help from local libraries to find info about the slaveholder and the enslaved.

Lesson 16: Check newspapers for articles, obituaries, and photos of family members.

Lesson 17: Visit cemeteries and search for previously unknown names in the family plot.

Lesson 18: Search birth and death records (AKA vital records).

Lesson 19: Take a genealogy trip to explore the homeland and examine records stored only locally.

Lesson 20: Understand that self-publishing your book is freedom to get the job done.

If you know someone who could use Kathy's help to turn their research into a legacy book their family will love, reach out: [Kathy@KathyLynneMarshall.com](mailto:Kathy@KathyLynneMarshall.com).

Join Kathy's newsletter for monthly tips on genealogy techniques and writing your book. You may be the lucky winner of one of her monthly book or art prizes.

Check out Kathy Lynne Marshall's nonfiction books on the African American Literature Book Club ([AALBC.com](http://AALBC.com)) and on [Amazon](http://Amazon) for more examples of how to write your own family stories for inclusion in the American historical record.

